

Report

Adams National Historic Park

■ 1.0 Site Description

Figure 1. Birthplaces



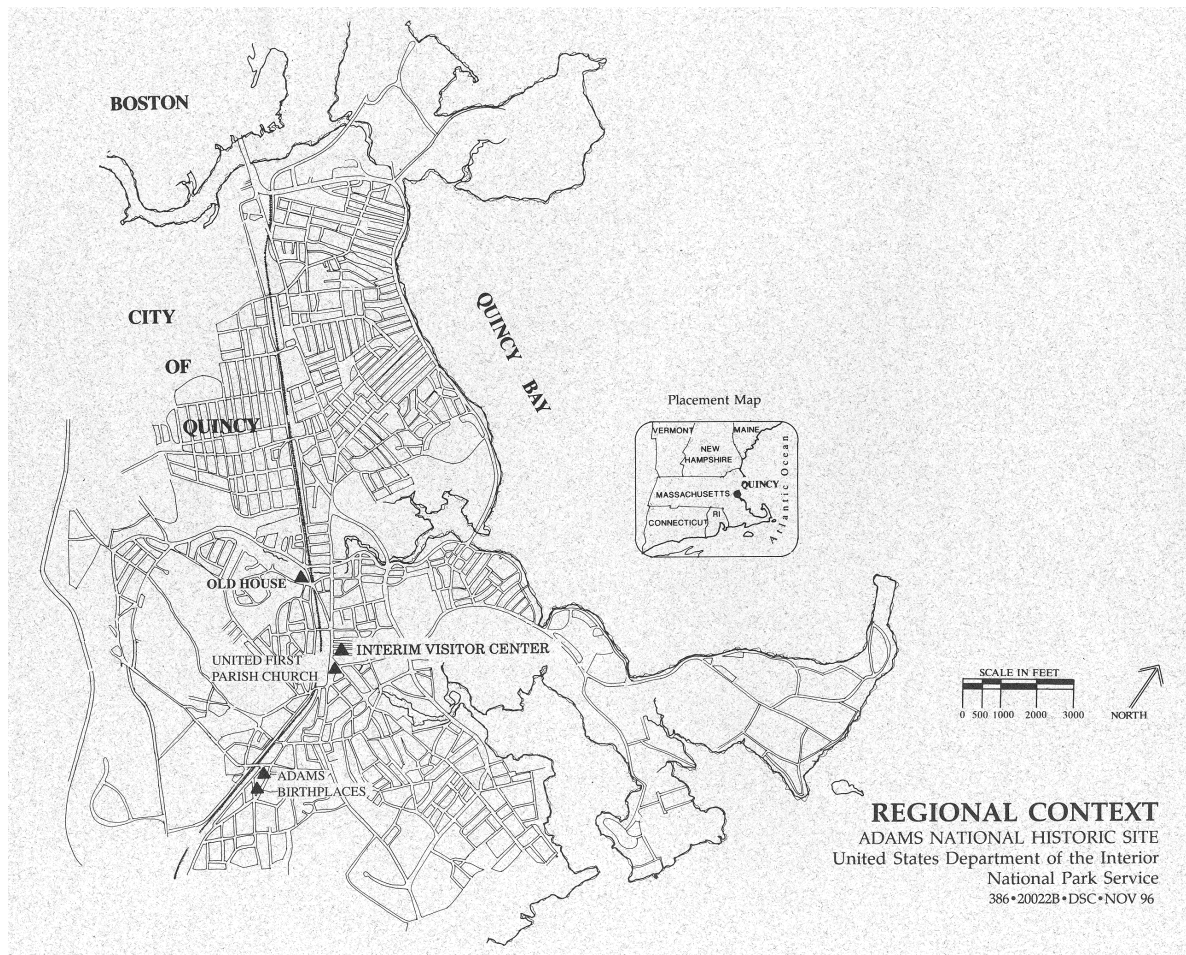
The Adams National Historic Park (NHP), located in Quincy, Massachusetts, was added to the NPS in 1946 to honor the contributions of the Adams family to the United States. The NHP today consists of four distinct properties:

- The birthplaces of John Adams and John Quincy Adams (see Figure 1), which are located adjacent to each other on Franklin Street south of downtown Quincy. These properties were given to the NPS by the Quincy Historical Society in 1979.
- The “Old House,” which was purchased by John Adams in 1781 and housed four generations of the Adams Family until 1927. This site includes several other buildings including an 1873 carriage house, a stone library and the adjacent Beale property.

- The United First Parish Church located in Quincy Center, which holds the burial crypt of both Presidents and first ladies.
- A Visitor Center, which is housed in leased space in the President's Plaza complex in downtown Quincy.

Figure 2 shows the orientation of these sites in the City of Quincy.

Figure 2. Map of Sites



The Adams NHP consists of the four sites described above, totaling 12.59 acres. The birthplaces and Old House are owned by the NPS, while the United First Parish Church remains an active congregation.

The sites are separated from each other and surrounded by urban development. The Church is located in the center of Quincy, in the center of a major traffic rotary. The Old House is located on the edge of a primarily residential neighborhood, while the birthplaces are surrounded by a dense neighborhood that includes both residential and commercial land uses. A complex and dense street network limits the ability of tourists to

either drive or walk between sites. No parking is provided by the NPS at either the Old House or the birthplaces, and only limited on street parking is available.

The NHP is open to the public between mid-April and mid-November. Visitation to the Adams NHP is relatively low compared to other Boston-area parks but is growing rapidly. Last year's visitation was 65,600 representing an increase of 35 percent over 1995. Visitation through July 1999 was running 26 percent over 1998. The Park completed a General Management Plan in 1996 that emphasized development of a permanent Visitor Center, expanded interpretive programs, and continuation and enhancement of partnerships with other historic sites in the area.

■ 2.0 Existing ATS

The Park currently operates a shuttle system that links the birthplaces, the Old House and the Visitor Center. The Church is located across the street from the Visitor Center. One rubber-tired trolley is operated through a contract with the Brush Hill Transportation Company. Visitors are encouraged to start their trip at the Visitor Center where they are provided information. Free validated parking is provided at an adjacent garage but there is a \$2.00 per person charge for the tour. Trolleys leave every half-hour with tourists being taken first to the birthplace for a half-hour tour, and then to the Old House and its grounds where they are given another ranger-led tour. Rangers are in constant communication with each other and the trolley drivers and can reroute the trolley to accommodate large groups and other special requirements. Park rangers at the Visitor Center help balance out demands on the system and the resources on busy days. The trolley is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Trolley



■ 3.0 ATS Needs

Additional Alternative Transportation Systems (ATS) needs identified include:

- Addition of a second trolley during busier times of the year to provide 15-minute rather than 30-minute headways. This would help to relieve schedule pressure and moderately increase the number of visitors who could be served.
- A trolley service between the Fore River shipyard and the Adams NHP. The Shipyard currently serves as the terminal for Harbor Express, which provides water transportation service to downtown Boston and Logan Airport. The United States Naval and Shipbuilding Museum and the U.S.S. Salem, a World War II heavy cruiser, are located at the Shipyard. A trolley linking the two tourist sites would benefit both the Adams NHP and the Shipyard by attracting Boston-based tourists to Quincy.
- Both the Shipyard and Marina Bay, a mixed-use waterfront development in North Quincy, are potential sites for water transportation to the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. The City of Quincy is strongly promoting this concept. A trolley service could also link the Adams NHP to Marina Bay if this became a gateway to the Harbor Islands.
- The MBTA Red Line and South Shore commuter rail system have stops in Quincy Center, within easy walking distance of the Visitor Center. While some visitors do use the system, there is little information at either the Boston or Quincy end to encourage usage and orient visitors. Since the Red Line has two branches, some visitors end up at the wrong location. Improved signing and information services in downtown Boston MBTA stations and at Quincy Center would promote use of these services by tourists.

■ 4.0 Basis of ATS Needs

The shuttle service, which costs the NPS approximately \$60,000 per year, is viewed as a necessity to meet visitor interpretive goals, provide a pleasant visitor experience and preserve the historic resources that the NHP features. The shuttle service enables the Park to interpret the story of the Adams family sequentially, beginning with a Visitor Center orientation, followed by the birthplaces and then the Old House. Since the ideal number of visitors on a single tour is limited (eight to 10 at the Old House and about 15 at the birthplaces), the shuttle system provides Park personnel a greater level of control. As discussed earlier, the shuttle also addresses the lack of parking at individual sites and the problems encountered by visitors in negotiating local streets.

Additional services proposed would have the following benefits:

- Addition of a trolley on the current route will enable more visitors to be served, improve visitor convenience by reducing waiting times and provide Park personnel

more flexibility in managing the flow of visitors, particularly large groups. An additional trolley may also enable service to be provided to non-NPS historic sites in Quincy, and the Abigail Adams birthplace in Weymouth. Quincy has developed a Heritage Trail that includes colonial, maritime and industrial sites of interest.

- Trolley service to the Fore River Shipyard would provide a key link to the existing water transportation service to downtown Boston, in addition to a possible gateway to the Harbor Islands. This would help to promote the Park among the large base of tourists in downtown Boston and provide additional interpretive opportunities.

■ 5.0 Bibliography

National Park Service. Adams National Historic Site General Management Plan. December 1996.

Adams National Historic Site Fact Sheets.

Quincy 2000 Corporation. Quincy Area Market Guide. 1997.

■ 6.0 Persons Interviewed

Marianne Peak, Superintendent

Caroline Keinath, Deputy Superintendent